

Message Text

SECRET

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ACTION SS-25

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S E C R E T MADRID 7996

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR, MARR, GI, SP
SUBJECT: U.S. NAVY SHIP VISITS TO GIBRALTAR

REF: MADRID 7906

1. SUBSEQUENT TO DELIVERY OF THE US NOTE OF OCT 18 TO THE FOREIGN MINISTRY REGARDING THE VISIT TO GIBRALTAR AT THE BEGINNING OF OCT OF THE USS NIMITZ AND THE USS SOUTH CAROLINA, THE MINISTRY'S DIRECTOR GENERAL FOR EUROPEAN AND ATLANTIC AFFAIRS (AGUIRRE) HAS UNDERTAKEN TO REMIND US OF A "GENTLEMEN'S AGREEMENT" REACHED IN JAN 1968. THERE IS NO SUGGESTION IN HIS DOING SO THAT THE US HAS VIOLATED THE GENTLEMEN'S AGREEMENT, ONLY A DESIRE TO BE REASSURED THAT THE AGREEMENT WILL CONTINUE TO BE APPLIED BY THE US.

2. ACCORDING TO AGUIRRE, THIS AGREEMENT GREW OUT OF THE SPANISH PROTEST OF A VISIT OF SOME 14 US NAVY SHIPS AT ONE TIME TO GIBRALTAR EARLY IN JAN 1968, TO WHICH THE GOS HAD REACTED STRONGLY, APPARENTLY SUGGESTING THAT VISITS OF SUCH MAGNITUDE MIGHT CALL INTO QUESTION CONTINUED SPANISH ACCEPTANCE OF THE PRESENCE OF THE US NUCLEAR SUBMARINES AT ROTA.

3. HE REPORTS THAT AT A MEETING AT THE HOUSE OF CHIEF JUSMG IN MADRID THAT MONTH BETWEEN THE COMMANDER OF THE 6TH FLEET (ADM MARTIN) AND HIMSELF, A GENTLEMEN'S AGREEMENT WAS REACHED THAT IN THE FUTURE SIMULTANEOUS VISITS TO GIBRALTAR BY LARGE NUMBERS OF NAVY SHIPS, SUCH AS COULD BE EXPECTED TO RAISE POLITICAL

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QUESTIONS IN SPAIN, WOULD BE AVOIDED. AN EXACT CEILING WAS NOT

SET, BUT AGUIRRE HAD TALKED IN TERMS OF 2 SHIPS AT ANY ONE TIME
AND ADMIRAL MARTIN OF 4.

4. THIS AGREEMENT WAS, ACCORDING TO AGUIRRE, KNOWN BY THE THEN
CNO AND UNDERSECRETARY OF DEFENSE NITZE.

5. SO FAR AS FOREIGN MINISTRY OFFICIALS KNOW, IT HAS BEEN
RATHER FAITHFULLY OBSERVED BY THE UNITED STATES IN THE YEARS
SINCE.

6. ACTION REQUESTED: IN VIEW OF AGUIRRE'S QUERY, WE WOULD
APPRECIATE BEING AUTHORIZED TO INFORM HIM, IF THIS IS
THE CASE, THAT THE GENTLEMEN'S AGREEMENT IS INDEED BEING
APPLIED BY THE UNITED STATES NAVY.
STABLER

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